Environmentalist drag queen calls on Patagonia to drop trademark infringement lawsuit: ‘Let’s make peace’

Patagonia claims in the lawsuit that branding associated with drag persona Pattie Gonia could cause ‘confusion’ among consumers

Rachel Dobkin in New York
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An environmentalist drag queen who goes by the name Pattie Gonia has called on the outdoor clothing brand Patagonia to drop a trademark infringement lawsuit it filed against the influencer.

“This is not a brand conflict,” Wyn Wiley, who created the Pattie Gonia persona eight years ago, said in a video released on social media Wednesday. “This is a corporation trying to erase an activist, and this is how corporations bully individuals who cannot match their resources, because this would take away not only my activism and my career, but also the livelihoods of the team I employ.”

In January, Patagonia filed a federal lawsuit claiming that branding associated with Pattie Gonia is “likely to cause confusion, mistake, or deception” among consumers.

Wiley, known for going into the great outdoors in full glam makeup and hair to promote environmental causes, said he had spent the last four months trying to quietly resolve the matter outside of court. With no such agreement reached, Wiley decided to break his silence.

An environmentalist drag queen who goes by the name Pattie Gonia has called on the outdoor clothing brand Patagonia to drop a trademark infringement lawsuit it filed against the influencer *(Evan Benally-Atwood)*

The drag queen claimed in Wednesday’s Instagram video, “I have never used [Patagonia’s] logo, font, or anything from their brand on our merch website.”

Wiley also mentioned how the Pattie Gonia persona was “named after a region in South America called Patagonia, a name that predates both me and the clothing brand by 500 years.”

A Patagonia spokesperson told *The Independent* it has “a responsibility to protect the company that generations of employees have helped build.”

Patagonia’s lawsuit came after Wiley filed a trademark application for the drag persona, which the brand said in the lawsuit “reflects Pattie Gonia’s departure from discrete use of a persona to engage in activism and confirms Defendants’ intent instead to launch a wide-ranging commercial enterprise under the PATTIE GONIA brand.”

Patagonia claims in the lawsuit that the drag persona Pattie Gonia could cause ‘confusion’ among consumers *(Getty Images)*

The company is suing Wiley for “nominal monetary damages” of just $1, but the influencer argues the real cost is far greater.

“What they’re actually trying to do is to take away my name permanently and threaten me with more than $1 million in legal fees,” Wiley said.

The Patagonia spokesperson has insisted the lawsuit “is not about seeking financial gain, nor is it about challenging anyone’s identity or right to advocacy, protest, or creative expression.

“The last thing we wanted was a legal fight with someone who shares our values, but we must protect our business and employees.”

In an open letter to Patagonia Wednesday, Wyn Wiley, who is behind the Pattie Gonia persona, wrote, ‘Let’s make peace’ *(Samuel Crossley)*

Wiley, who has 3 million followers across social media and has been said to have raised $3.7 million for environmental and social justice non-profits, told his followers, “Join me in telling Patagonia, ‘drop the lawsuit,’ make your voice heard everywhere Patagonia is, and let me be very clear, do so in a classy, respectful, and peaceful way.”

In an open letter to Patagonia posted on Instagram Wednesday, Wiley wrote, “I have believed from the beginning that there is room for an agreement that protects your trademark while letting me keep my name and my work.”

“I believe that still today,” the influencer said. “Let’s make peace and get back to our common love of the planet including our namesake region in South America named Patagonia.”

Patagonia said in its statement to *The Independent* that it had tried to work out an agreement over the past several years “that would allow Pattie Gonia to continue their work while also protecting the Patagonia trademark.”

“These conversations have included multiple proposals—each intended to support that path—along with ongoing dialogue and genuine efforts to avoid this ending up in court,” the spokesperson said. “Unfortunately, we could not reach an agreement.”

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